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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

Resource Directory of Claims Agents

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1. **Objective:** To improve services to Virginia veterans by partnering with veterans service organizations (VSOs) to create a resource directory of non-DVS claims agents, then sharing the information with members of the General Assembly.
2. **Background:**
 - 823,000 veterans reside in this Commonwealth.
 - Veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at a much higher rate than veterans of past conflicts.
 - DVS Claims Agents help Virginia veterans and eligible dependents file for federal and state veterans benefits. Legislation passed by the 2012 General Assembly set a ratio of 1 DVS Claims Agent for every 23,500 Virginia veterans; DVS will employ 36 Claims Agents in FY13.
 - According to VA, the number of claims filed nationwide increased from 888,000 in 2008 to 1.3 million in 2011.
3. **Discussion:**
 - Even with the new ratio of DVS Claims Agents to veterans, the number of claims filed by Virginia veterans is expected to exceed the workload capacity of the 36 DVS Claims Agents.
 - Claims Agents are also employed by the VFW, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the American Legion and other VSOs. Like DVS Claims Agents, these agents are accredited by the VA to file claims.
 - To provide excellent service to their constituents, members of the General Assembly should be aware of both the DVS Claims Agents serving their district and of any local volunteer VSO Claims Agents.
 - It is hoped that this initiative will offer Virginia veterans increased opportunities to file VA claims. VSO Claims Agents can also provide valuable assistance when DVS Claims Agents are unavailable.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor, through the Department of Veterans Services, partner with veterans service organizations to create a resource directory of non-DVS claims agents. This information should be shared with members of the General Assembly.

Adopted
July 18, 2012